

Pam
L. Amer.
Educ.

1301

A GOOD NEIGHBOR



Elizabeth Meredith Lee

Work of Woman's Division of Christian Service
in South America



Crandon Institute, Montevideo, Uruguay
Lima High School, Lima, Peru

Emphasis on Education

OVER A PERIOD of sixty-seven years, since the women of The Methodist Church founded their first school in South America, the emphasis of their work has been on education. All but one of our schools have government recognition. Seven offer courses from kindergarten to high school. One, Colegio Norte Americano, in Rosario, has no high-school course, but offers primary and special courses in English and commercial. We have only one school giving college studies, Colegio Bennett, but we co-operate in Granbery Institute, which has a junior-college course. Two institutions

offer specialized courses for the training of Christian workers.

Of the schools offering regular courses, all but one is crowded to capacity. The lowest enrollment is 154; the highest, 606. All over South America education is increasingly popular. No longer do people look upon it as a social luxury. Among the middle classes an education is now considered a prerequisite to success in governmental offices and in private business. From Panama to Brazil, hundreds of new schools are being built. Yet there are not enough to accommodate all the youth who are eager for an

education. Between 1932 and 1936 the population of Brazil increased 8 per cent, while school matriculations increased 35 per cent. The greatest relative increase was in secondary education. Of schools of this grade the increase was 60 per cent. In 1941, there were thirty thousand children in Rio de Janeiro who could not get into schools because there were not enough buildings to accommodate them. In many cases, schools have to have two sessions a day in order to accommodate the numbers.

Students seek our evangelical schools in spite of several handicaps. In only a few of our schools do they find the buildings and equipment which the newer schools, built by the governments, have today. In spite of this, they are willing to pay the tuition which is usually more than they would have to pay in government schools, some of which are free with the exception of a small matriculation fee. The greatest handicap is the opposition of the Catholic Church. In one capital city parents were warned by posters in all the churches that attendance of their children in evangelical schools would mean excommunication. Not a single student left.

The education offered by our institutions is a liberalizing and an evangelizing influence upon the students and upon their homes. From 10 to 33 per cent of the students in our schools this year are evangelicals. Even when these young people do not, for traditional and family reasons, join the Evangelical Church, their lives are broadened and deepened. They become the friends of the Christian ideals which

our schools present. They often become, also, their defenders against the growing tide of fanaticism and prejudice which still threaten the minority religious group. Asked what our schools were doing for the students that government schools do not do, a graduate, who is now a teacher in one of our institutions, replied, "The moralization of teaching; honesty, sincerity, and thoroughness."

Our schools are doing everything possible to co-operate with the efforts the governments are making to lift the standards of education all over the continent. They follow the courses of study prescribed by the law and make all necessary reports to the Department of Education. In Brazil, for example, a report of the teaching done each day in every class period in every secondary school must be reported monthly to the Department of Education in Rio. Every grade of every student must also be reported, and no student can be dismissed without permission of the government. In Brazil, also, great efforts are being made in the country to better the health of students. To this end, it is the law that every school which has government recognition must submit its monthly menus to the Department. Those menus must include a prescribed amount of milk, butter, and eggs for each student in the boarding department, as well as two green vegetables and two fruits daily.

In addition to the prescribed government curriculum, and, in some countries, within this pattern, our schools offer courses which enrich life and give practical training.



Colegio Izabela Hendrix, Belo Horizonte



The graduates and commencement speakers and guests, Colegio Centenario, Santa Maria, Brazil

Girls who played in the match game of volleyball between Bennett College in Rio de Janeiro and Colegio Izabela Hendrix in Belo Horizonte



Second year commercial class,
Granbery Institute, Juiz de Fora,
Brazil



Freshman high-school class in chemistry laboratory at Colegio Bennett, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Broadening Horizons Through Teaching English

ONE DAY IN LA PAZ, BOLIVIA, we met a graduate of the American Institute, who is now prominent in the life of the country. Speaking fluent English, he remarked: "A language is just like a pair of eyes. If you have one horizon with one language, you have a double horizon with two languages."

It is often necessary for a traveler in South America to speak through an interpreter. Always in our churches and schools there are men and women who can render this service because they studied English in mission schools. When many of our schools were established, their *raison d'être*, in the eyes of the South American public, was to give an education in the English language. Today hundreds of men and women who had such early training have greatly broadened horizons, being well versed

in English literature and provided with a language tool which gives them access to a wider knowledge of the world. Many of them are teachers in our own schools, as well as in those of the government.

Whereas, in early years it was possible to offer practically the entire curriculum in English, in some countries today the law requires that the major part of the courses be given in either Spanish or Portuguese. In Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay, more leeway is given in the teaching of English than in Brazil, where it may now be taught only a few hours a week as a foreign language. From the national standpoint, this is easily understandable, but the students of the present day are not acquiring the working knowledge of English which was possible in earlier years.

Teaching Bible

IN MOST OF OUR SCHOOLS Bible is still a required study, although it cannot be counted in the official examinations and grades. Most of our schools announce in their catalogues that every student is expected to study the Bible. In Brazil, according to the present law, Bible cannot be a compulsory subject. However, the law says that if ten pupils in any school ask for a class in religion, the school must provide it. Some schools say it is difficult to find time for Bible because of the overcrowded government-prescribed curriculum.

In visiting Bible classes in our institutions the students were always found to be eager and responsive. Sometimes they were busy making attractive Bible notebooks with maps and pictures which were the result of their own artistic talents; at other times they were holding a lively discussion on some ethical questions pertaining to their daily living, trying to decide

what Jesus would do in similar circumstances. In Brazil, it is the custom to give a Bible to each girl when she graduates from one of our schools. The seniors in Colegio Izabela Hendrix, at Belo Horizonte, asked their teacher if they might not have their Bibles at the beginning of the senior year so that they might become dear to them as they studied and marked them. This was done. On commencement day these same Bibles were gathered up and formally presented to the graduates to whom they had become priceless treasures.

One of the main difficulties in giving religious education in our schools is neither the government regulations nor the crowded schedules. It is the paucity of our own resources. Whenever competent teachers with hearts aflame are present in any school in sufficient number, a way can be found for effective religious training.

Homemaking

OUR SCHOOLS OPENED another horizon when they pioneered in the art of homemaking in South America. Crandon Institute, in Montevideo, began this work in 1922, when it founded what is claimed to be the first department of home economics on the continent. Eight years after that, Lima High School entered its new building, which had the best-equipped home-economics laboratory in South America at that time.

Through the years this work has advanced in popularity from the time when it was not considered "genteel" for a lady to enter her own kitchen to the present day, when 124 women are following special courses in homemaking at Crandon. Not only have hundreds of girls in these schools learned to cook and sew, to make a home attractive and to take care of their children beautifully, but untold numbers of women throughout these countries have benefited by the home-economics broadcasts which

have brought into their distant homes friendly advice and recipes. In Peru and Argentina we visited in the homes of graduates who are today carrying out the training they received at school and making of their homes little heavens on earth.

There is much need and opportunity to increase this useful work which goes into the making of Christian homes. In March, 1942, the junior-college course in home economics was established in Colegio Bennett. Plans are already on foot to equip a laboratory in the fine new school at Belo Horizonte and to include in the new plant to be erected at Porto Alegre a home-economics department. The eagerness with which this growing city will welcome such a course is shown by the fact that, when the General Electric Company advertises a cooking school, hundreds of women rush to get their names on the waiting list and crowd the hall to learn the culinary art.

Youth Institutes

EVERYWHERE OUR SCHOOLS are co-operating in this type of work with young people. In February, 1941, Lima High School was the hostess to the Lima Youth Conference, the first meeting of evangelical youth in Latin America. About the same time, Colegio Piracicabano,

in Brazil, was entertaining the first Methodist Youth Conference in that country. Crandon Institute, through its students and missionaries, is active in the League work of the Emmanuel and Central Churches in Montevideo. These young people like to gather at Crandon.



Scholarships

ACAREFUL INVESTIGATION revealed the fact that most of the students are paying their way, but that the few scholarships granted are being carefully placed and well used by their recipients. In some countries a large percentage of the girls in Protestant families do not go to high school. This would indicate that more scholarship funds might well be used to aid such worthy girls, especially the daughters of pastors.

College Work

IN SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE the name often given to our schools is "Colegio," so easily translated "college" but not actually meaning that. Up to 1941, the Woman's Division had no college work in South America except as it made a small appropriation to Granbery Institute in Juiz de Fora, Brazil, which has a junior-college course, where this year fifteen girls are studying. In 1941 Bennett College in Rio laid the foundations of a junior-college course when it admitted girls to a preparatory year. With the completion of the new college building, Bennett launched the junior college in March, 1942. Besides the course in home economics, courses in nursery school education, and religious education, and social work are offered. This college course is beginning without official government recognition, as it prefers to have freedom for experimentation in these

practical courses which are new to Brazil and will prepare young women for lives of definite Christian service.

Crandon Institute, two years ago, inaugurated a Liceo Course, with official incorporation, which gives its graduates entrance into the university. This may also be called the beginning of a junior college.

Need for Higher Education

ONE OF THE MAIN POINTS of strength in many of our schools is the fact that graduates are now members of the faculty. These men and women who have grown up in the evangelical atmosphere are the people who can do most to help maintain that atmosphere in the schools of today.

Increasingly in all these countries it is becoming the law that no one may teach in a secondary school unless he has graduated from a Government Normal School or a School of Education. The educational system of the whole evangelical movement has no provision for preparing teachers for its own schools. It has no provision for influencing, through higher education, the philosophy of the intellectual leaders of the future. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is awake to the situation, and is doing its best to occupy the educational field, especially in Brazil, where it has already established, in different states of this country, five or six Schools of Education to prepare Brazilian teachers for Catholic schools.



Colegio Piracicabano, Piracicaba, Brazil

One of the greatest challenges lying before the Christian movement in Latin America is the establishment of a Christian university in Brazil, of which one school would be a School of Education. A member of the State Council of Education in Brazil estimated that to found such an institution according to government requirements would cost at least one million dollars, covering campus, buildings, and endowment. In other countries an effort should be made to establish normal schools to fill the need for training teachers.

Pioneering in Buildings

IN THE BEGINNING of our work, the schools we built set the standards for school buildings in many of these countries. Within recent years, some governments have gone far beyond our standards of other days. In 1941, however, we have again set out as pioneers. To the splendid new buildings of Colegio Izabela Hendrix, in Belo Horizonte, come visitors every day, asking to study this beautiful, modern school plant, consisting of an administration building, a dormitory, and an auditorium. The cost of these buildings was \$93,700.

On the campus of Colegio Bennett in Rio are two new buildings—the Erasmo Braga College Hall and a dormitory. These also are models.

The urgent need of a new plant for Colegio Norte Americano in Porto Alegre will be met by money provided by the Woman's Division and from proceeds of the sale of the old property. Crandon Institute must have another building to accommodate the rapidly increasing enrollment. From the 1942 Week of Prayer Offering,

\$25,000 will be contributed toward this building. Colegio Norte Americano, in Rosario, needs an auditorium.

Social Service

THE MOST OUTSTANDING social project in which the Woman's Division co-operates with the Division of Foreign Missions is the People's Central Institute (Instituto Central do Povo) in Rio de Janeiro. Situated on a high hill in the heart of the slum district, this institution ministers to from 900 to 1,000 people daily in a primary school, a clinic where 4,050 treatments were given last year, and various classes for young people and adults. For the clinic the government buys all medicines and provides doctors and nurses. This was the first mother-and-child clinic in Rio. The buildings, which are crowded every day, are in very bad condition. All the wiring has been condemned by the government. The sanitary system is entirely inadequate. There is only one shower for the scores of boys who come to the Institute for games. When this shower is in use there is no water available for cooking classes! The classrooms are overcrowded with four hundred children from poor families who would otherwise have no education.

At Ribeirao Preto, where we had a school until 1935, when it was closed because it was thought it was impossible to invest in it sufficient funds to bring it up to government standards as an accredited school, we have one of the finest buildings in Brazil. Here we now have a social center which, although it is only a few years since it was organized, attracts to its doors about 170 people daily.



Colegio Bennett, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Training Church Workers

WHILE ALL OUR SCHOOLS are producing some young people who take their part in church life, two institutions give specialized training for Christian work.

In Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay we found young women who had been trained for Christian service in the Training School for Christian Workers in Buenos Aires. The leader in woman's work in Peru, the social worker in Sweet Memorial in Santiago, the secretary for Religious Education in Santiago (who is also continental secretary for the Federation of Methodist Women), three women pastors in Argentina, another pastor and a social-evangelistic worker in Uruguay, many pastors' wives, and others doing various kinds of church work are graduates of this school which was the only institution of higher academic standing in all of South America giving this specialized training.

For two years plans have been under way to unite this school with the Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires, and to build a new building for the institution. The academic union of these two schools took place on January 1, 1942, and it is hoped that the building will be ready for occupancy by March, 1943. The new school will be called the Union Theological Seminary (Facultad Evangelica de Teologia). In this united school, which is interdenominational in

its local board of directors and in its supporting constituency, and international in its student body and faculty, the cream of the youth of the evangelical movement are studying to prepare themselves for future service. In order to make this school better known on the west coast, the field committee is asking for an increased appropriation for extension work so that members of the faculty may attend conferences and hold institutes and evangelistic services in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, at the same time recruiting students.

In Brazil, there has so far been no definite training of girls for church work, but last year a beginning was made in connection with the Methodist Institute in Ribeirao Preto. The people of The Methodist Church in Brazil have never become reconciled to the closing of our school in this important town in the interior of the state of Sao Paulo. Recently the board of Directors voted to start a Training School for Christian Service in connection with this institution. In 1941, two young women were the first students. In 1942, fourteen are enrolled. The pastors of this central regional council (annual conference) are in sympathy with this project, and it is hoped that a school may be developed here which will give to the church in Brazil consecrated and well-trained young women helpers.



Faculty and students, Union Theological Seminary, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Christian Literature

PERHAPS THE GREATEST evangelizing force we have today is Christian literature. Throughout The Methodist Church in South America there are several excellent church periodicals, such as *Accion y Fe*, in Peru; *El Estandarte* and *La Idea*, in the River Plate Region; and *Expositor Cristao*, in Brazil. The magazine in which women are especially interested, however, is *O Voz Missionaria*, published in Sao Paulo. The story of the rise of this little paper sounds like a story of clever business management and unusual co-operation. When this magazine was started, in 1929, it had twelve pages and 1,000 copies were printed. Today it has thirty-two pages and 17,300 subscriptions. The goal for 1942 is 20,000 subscriptions.

The secret of the success of this paper is not only in its editing, but in the co-operation it has secured from hundreds of evangelical Brazilian women. In every Woman's Society of Christian Service in Brazil there is one woman selected as the agent of *O Voz Missionaria*. Each year she directs a month's campaign in her own

locality, securing not only renewals, but new subscriptions from neighbors and friends. The subscription price is only 2 *milreis* (ten cents), but that is as much to a woman of Brazil as fifty cents is to us. The general agent in Sao Paulo receives these subscriptions, which must be paid in advance. She then sends to each local agent the magazines ordered by her, and she in turn distributes them to the subscribers. This is not only a business method but a means of evangelism, as this Christian agent calls in many homes. The magazine now goes to subscribers in Argentina, Africa, Bolivia, Chile, England, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the United States of America. In Brazil, it goes into homes, churches, orphanages, hospitals, offices, banks, hotels, camps, leper colonies, and prisons.

The need for Christian literature in South America is unlimited. Here we would do well to give largely that the Word of God and the interpretations of Christian principles may be spread abroad across this great reading continent. Money is needed for such projects as the publishing of a textbook on home economics, written in Portuguese by one of our missionaries; for the preparation of material for nursery-school education, of which none exists; for the translation of many Christian books to be placed alongside of the vast amount of secular literature which can be found in translation and in Spanish and Portuguese in the many bookstores all over the continent; for the writing of other books and tracts. Funds are also necessary to make possible the distribution of such literature. Three thousand dollars of the 1941 Week of Prayer offering has been allocated for Christian literature in Latin America.



Neusa Escobar in Sao Carlos likes to secure subscriptions to *O Voz Missionaria*

A *Voz Missionaria* Agent in an interior town of Brazil, and her happy little family



Evangelism

AMONG THE FORTY-FOUR MISSIONARIES of the Woman's Division of Christian Service in South America, only one is engaged in church work. She is church visitor in Central Church, in Sao Paulo. Forty-two are in educational or social work. Another acts as agent of the woman's magazine in Brazil, and in that capacity has close contact with the women of the churches.

This lack of evangelistic missionaries may be one of the factors in the slow growth of the church in all the countries but Brazil, where the membership has increased five thousand in the the past five years. In the other countries the church has decreased in membership or has remained at a standstill. In Peru, where we once had an evangelistic missionary, there is need that that work should be reinstated. In Panama, Chile, and Bolivia, where the Woman's Division of Christian Service has no work, the fields are white unto the harvest. To send some evangelistic missionaries to South America should be a next step.

Rural Work

WITH THE THOUGHT OF EVANGELISM comes the thought of the great neglected areas of South America. Nine tenths of all missionary funds designated for this continent are spent in the cities; one tenth remains for the fields covering the vast hinterland of Brazil, the pampas of Argentina, the sierras of Peru and Bolivia, and the fertile valleys of Chile. On a continent where 85 per cent of the people live in rural areas, we have no woman missionary engaged in rural work.

Women Who Lead

IN EVERY LAND where the Woman's Division of Christian Service has raised the standard of Christ there are today women who are bearing testimony to his power. Some of them are well known and doing important public work. Others serve in humble ways.

There are graduates of our schools who are a credit to the institutions where they have studied. All over the continent we found them,

proudly saying, "I am a graduate of Granbery, of Crandon, of Lima, of Piracicabano." They are doctors and teachers, ministers who receive appointment from annual conferences and social workers, wives of bishops and pastors, dietitians and librarians, trained nurses and secretaries, writers, artists, and editors. One of them is the leading woman aviator of her country.

Many unsung women are making their contribution to the evangelical movement. In Central Church, Sao Paulo, is an old Negro woman who earns her living by taking in washing. Besides giving \$2.50 to the building fund of the Theological Seminary, she does, free of charge, the laundry of two Seminary students as her way of helping them to become ministers of the gospel. On the outskirts of Juiz de Fora is a neat little church for which the women of Central Church are largely responsible. They raised most of the money to buy the land and erect the building, and now they give their money and time to run a little clinic for the poor people of this crowded neighborhood.



Directora of Primary School of Granbery Institute, Juiz de Fora, Brazil

Need of More Missionaries

THE GROUP OF MISSIONARIES now working in South America are women highly efficient and deeply dedicated to their task. In Latin lands, because the civilization is so much like our own, the relationship between missionaries and nationals seems much closer than in the Orient. All the missionaries engaged in school work live in the schools, eating with the students and helping to instill a homelike Christian atmosphere in the dormitories.

The institutions are fairly well staffed, but few of them are doing all they might accomplish if there were more workers. Especially do the schools need women trained in religious education who can have that margin of time so necessary for individual work among the students. The opportunities for expanding work are unlimited, both in the present projects of the Woman's Division of Christian Service and in further co-operation in union projects. It is earnestly hoped that we may enter some of the open doors in Panama, Bolivia, and Chile, as well as in the other countries. Some of the pressing needs are a nurse for the Nurse Training School in La Paz, a director for the girls' department of Callao High School, a social-evangelistic worker for the Braz District in Sao Paulo, where 200,000 people need help; a dormitory superintendent for Lins, Brazil; a home-economics teacher for El Vergel, Chile; a nurse for a clinic for the Mapuche Indians in southern Chile; and evangelistic workers everywhere.

Inter-American Friendship

AT AN ASSEMBLY of the students in Cochabamba, Bolivia, they sang in English the song known to us as "God Bless America." However, these Americans, high up in the Andes, representing seventeen distinct racial backgrounds, had improved the words. They sang it, "God Bless *the Americas*." The evangelical movement in South America is greatly helping to bring about this blessing by furthering mutual understanding and sympathy between the American Republics.

A leading North American businessman, who is a member of the Crandon board of directors, remarked, "This school is doing much more basically to help inter-American understanding than many other agencies on which the govern-

ment is spending money." This can be said not only because of the natural growth of friendship between Christian workers from North America who join hands with their Christian colleagues below the equator in a mutual endeavor to make the principles of Christ prevail — both North and South. It is a result also of that constant interchange of students which increases year by year, and in which our missionary work plays so large a part. Graduates from Bennett, Crandon, Lima, and other schools are in the vanguard of those young people who are the recipients of some of the many scholarships now offered to Latin American students by colleges in the United States. There is room and need for more work along this line. The Board might well establish its own Latin American scholarship fund to enable worthy young people from the Methodist churches in South America to attend our church colleges in the States.

Is Our Work Needed?

IT WAS A HOT SUNDAY AFTERNOON in Ribeirao Preto, Brazil. We were standing in the patio of a humble home of a member of The Methodist Church, whose co-operation made it possible for a young woman from the Methodist Institute to gather the little children together for a Sunday school. The pastor of the church began to tell the children a story. "Many years ago," he said, "some good people came down from the North with love in their hearts and the Word of God in their hands. . . . They told us the story of the Jesus who loves little children. . . . We want these good people to keep on coming to help us to make Jesus known to all the people of our great country."

This was the sentiment expressed by many. The three bishops of The Methodist Church in these countries, each a distinguished and successful leader in his own field, expressed the hope that a larger proportion of our mission funds might be allocated to South America, and that more Christian colleagues from the North might join them in their efforts to spread the life-transforming gospel of Jesus Christ.

One comes away from this teeming continent, with its matchless material resources, its rapidly expanding population and its increasing influence in world affairs, feeling that God is today opening many doors, and he is calling his church to enter in before it is too late.



*Stars mark centers of work under the Woman's Division of Christian Service.

Woman's Division of Christian Service
Board of Missions and Church Extension
The Methodist Church

Literature Headquarters: 420 Plum Street, Cincinnati, Ohio

Price, 10 cents each